

**From:** Peter Vessenes  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 1/23/02 1:11pm  
**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

Dear US DoJ,

I'm a business owner who uses a mix of closed and open sourced products, and I believe that the PFJ for Microsoft is bad for my business (10 employees), and bad for the economy as a whole. A significant percentage of the US population is employed by a small business -- While I don't claim to speak for all small businesses, I imagine my situation is a common one.

I'm not a lawyer, and I can't analyze the PFJ in any legally meaningful way, but I do know what things are bad for my business. The letter at <http://www.kegel.com/remedy/letter.html> details much better than I could many problems with the PFJ.

For example, the note "The PFJ does not require Microsoft to release documentation about the format of Microsoft Office documents" is astounding to me. As a small business, each new computer costs us about \$1,000, or about 10% of our hiring and training costs. If we add in the costs for Microsoft operating systems and applications, that number rises to about \$1,800 -- 8% of our cost for hiring an employee go directly to Microsoft!

The straight truth right now is that there are no competitors to Microsoft in the Office arena, which offer sufficient functionality to run our company. Our business must have software that reads and writes standard Microsoft Office file formats if we are to connect with other companies. Open Source programs like StarOffice keep up with Microsoft's changing file standards as well as they can, but it's a part of Microsoft's strategy to introduce backward incompatibility in software products.

This only hurts the economy, and finally the consumer! I do not need the new features of Microsoft Office XP, in fact I would be quite content to use the features found in Office 97, or Office 95. What I do need is to be able to send and receive documents in a format other companies can understand.

If Microsoft were to open their file formats, by writing complete technical descriptions of them, other companies would be able to introduce competing products which could interoperate, thereby nullifying one aspect of Microsoft's Office monopoly in corporate America. The competition would reduce the cost of those software products, and let me put my money into things like salary and corporate giving, rather than Microsoft's multi-billion dollar cash coffers.

Thank you for your time! I would be pleased to discuss this matter with you further if you are interested.

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